Haley Dowdie  
Period 3  
Model UN:Gender Equality  
Position Paper  
  
           Under the Declaration of Human Rights9, women and men alike are equal before the law. The rights of Humans hold true for all people on this planet and discriminate against nobody. According to the first 20 articles of the DHR, all humans are equally protected by the law and the Declaration of human rights. These freedoms are given to all as a people not a gender or race9.  
           As most Libyans share the same religious (Muslim) beliefs, their morals and ideas demonstrate commonality. Women and men across Libya have continuously worked to gain break down the social barriers that discriminate against women in order to achieve gender equality. In Libyan society, since women usually raise and teach the children, instilling within the youth the ideas of gender equality would evoke a brighter, more liberal future for Libya.  Like the Libyans, the Middle East pursues their Islamic beliefs and social codes. The more awareness and acceptance of gender equality in Middle Eastern nations would promote the spread and strengthening of the ideas across the Muslim nations of the globe.  
    The Libyan government approves the conditons of CEDAW4 which pertains to laws against discrimination of women. Nevertheless, due to  Islamic Shari’a Law and social morals, reservations are placed on Articles 2 which refers mainly to human rights along with Article 16 parts c and d which refers to divorces and children.4  
           Bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Tunisia, in Northern Africa1 lays the country of Libya. Though not located in the Middle East, Libya shares the same conservative social codes derived from the Muslim religion. Despite Qadhafi’s claims to have improved the Libyan women’s rank on a social scale, women still suffer the strife of gender inequality4. Though Libya’s Laws equally protect both men and women, the social and family codes (derived from Maliki School of Sunni Islam4) of Libyans often override the legal aspects of Libyan society. In Libyan families, private issues are often quieted and kept private despite the tragic sexual and physical domestic abuses of Libyan women7. Night work of any sort and other dangerous/ manly jobs are banned or viewed as unacceptable for Libyan women.  Though the wearing of veils to cover the bodies of Libyan women is not mandatory in Libya, women are socially and religiously pressure to wear the smothering attire. In the families of Libyans, the daughter(s) receives less inheritance, nearly half as much, than the son(s)4. According to Libya’s penal code, the punishment for killing a female because of adultery is reduced. Domestic violence by a man onto a wife receives a maximum of 2 year imprisonment. Lack of adherence to Qadahfi’s Islam results in a dangerous punishment for all sexes. 4  
           Conservative Libyans, often oppose gender equality, due to a lack of knowledge or because of a fear of corruption of Libyan society. Conservatives and those living in rural areas know and understand little of the social changes occurring for women in Libya. Others often assume that gender equality will result in Western promiscuity and a loss of religious and societal morals.  
           Libyan reformists and gender equality supporters seek widespread public awareness and education on gender equality to address the issues in the Middle East. Promoting the positive aspects and benefits of gender equality will also increase support in the Middle East. In order to fully resolve the issue of gender inequalities, the issue has to come out of the dark. Women’s sufferings need to be made public though awareness and education campaigns. Laws against domestic abuse need to be enforced by the government as well. Limiting Libya’s family and religious codes influence on Libya’s National laws will increase the equality of women and men and ensure enforcement of laws. Initiating support networks and shelters for women victimized from domestic abuse will allow for women to organize freely and discuss the issues opposed to simply hiding them.  Ultimately, in order to address gender inequality in the middle east the world and particularly Middle Easterners need to become more aware of the issue and each country has to enforce laws that protect women.   
  
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4 "Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa - Libya." UNHCR. Web. 02 May 2012.<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,FREEHOU,COUNTRYREP,LBY,456d621e2,47387b6dc,0.html>.  
  
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8 "Convention and Optional Protocol Signatures and Ratifications." *United Nations Enable*. Web. 8 May 2012. <http://www.un.org/disabilities/countries.asp?id=166>.  
  
9 Universal Declaration of Human Rights